

TRAIL & LANDSCAPE



*A Publication Concerned With
Natural History and Conservation*

The Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club

TRAIL & LANDSCAPE

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We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada through the Publication Assistance Program (PAP), toward our mailing costs.

The Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club

— Founded 1879 —

President

Eleanor Zurbrigg

Objectives of the Club: To promote the appreciation, preservation and conservation of Canada's natural heritage; to encourage investigation and publish the results of research in all fields of natural history and to diffuse the information on these fields as widely as possible; to support and co-operate with organizations engaged in preserving, maintaining or restoring environments of high quality for living things.

Club Publications: THE CANADIAN FIELD-NATURALIST, a quarterly devoted to reporting research in all fields of natural history relevant to Canada, and TRAIL & LANDSCAPE, a quarterly providing articles on the natural history of the Ottawa Valley and on club activities.

Field Trips, Lectures and other natural history activities are arranged for local members; see "Coming Events" in this issue.

Membership Fees: Individual (yearly) \$28 Sustaining (yearly) \$50
Family (yearly) \$30 Life (one payment) \$500

Benefactor \$500 Subscriptions to *Trail & Landscape*:
(libraries and institutions): \$28 per year (volume)

Postage for U.S. and other foreign countries please add \$5

Single copies of recent issues: \$6 each postpaid

Index to Vols. 1 - 20: \$10 postpaid; to Vols. 21-25 \$5 postpaid.

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Published by
The Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club
Box 35069, Westgate P.O., Ottawa, Ontario, K1Z 1A2

Volume 35 Number 2 April – June 2001

Welcome New Members	74
Golden Anniversary Membership List 1930-2001/ <i>Dave Smythe</i>	75
The 122 nd Annual Business Meeting/ <i>Fenja Brodo</i>	76
OFNC Committees for 2001/ <i>Frank Pope</i>	77
Fall Bird Sightings 2000/ <i>Chris Lewis</i>	79
Bird Watching at Shirleys Bay/ <i>Frank Pope</i>	85
A pacu/piranha in the Rideau Canal/ <i>Claude Renaud & Anne Phelps</i>	86
My Week at the Youth Naturalist Camp with the FON/ <i>Julian Potvin-Bernal</i>	90
The Doug Tarry Bird Study Awards for Young Ornithologists/ <i>Long Point Bird Observatory</i>	92
Results of the Taverner Cup Birding Competition/ <i>Jeff Harrison</i>	93
2001 Falcon Watch/ <i>Eve Ticknor</i>	98
Very Tall Trees found at Chelsea, Quebec/ <i>Pierre Landry</i>	99
Ode to Newfoundland/ <i>Charles J. Saso</i>	104
The "Blob"/ <i>Jack Holliday</i>	105
Notice: The Montreal Bird Festival	106
Coming Events	107

Welcome New Members

Ottawa Area

Thomas Allgoewer & family
Keith Barton
Elaine Brown
Dale Bursey
Adrian Carter & family
Janet Castle
Albert Chan
April Cole & family
Catherine Delroy
Rosmarie Gerber
Carla Hilado
Holly Hobart
Wayne & Anne Houston
Juanita Karsh & family

Roland Lamarche & family
Karen McLachlan Hamilton
Sheila MacLeod & family
Angela McPherson & family
Marion Myles
Richard Orawiec & family
Louise Schwartz & family
Bruce Simpson
Angela Sirnick
Jan Slumdoski
Marie-Louise Sullivan and Leo Clarkin
Carmen Thompson & family
Michele Trotier
Marla Williams

Other Areas

Wayne Harris, Swift Current SK
Tom, Linda & Simon Plath, Richmond BC

Dave Smythe
Membership Committee
February 2001

"Golden Anniversary" Membership List 1930-2001

*Dave Smythe
Membership Chair*

Joined in

1930	W. E. Ricker	Nanaimo	BC
1935	J. E. V. Goodwill	Victoria	BC
1936	W. H. Minshall	London	ON
1942	R. Yorke Edwards	Victoria	BC
1943	C. Stuart Houston	Saskatoon	SK
1943	Mrs. Sheila Thomson	Ottawa	ON
1944	Miss Mary Stuart	Ottawa	ON
1946	J. M. Gillett	Nepean	ON
1946	V. E. F. Solman	Ottawa	ON
1947	W. J. Cody	Ottawa	ON
1947	W. A. Fuller	Athabasca	AB
1948	W. Earl Godfrey	Ottawa	ON
1948	David Erskine	Willowdale	ON
1948	Mrs E. Frankton	Ottawa	ON
1949	Henry H. Hildebrand	Corpus Christi	TX
1950	H.G. Lumsden	Aurora	ON
1951	E. L. Bousfield	Ottawa	ON

This year we added **E. L. Bousfield** to our list. The President has sent him a letter of congratulations and a silver pin to commemorate the occasion.

Three prominent and long-time members of the Club passed away this year. Verna Ross McGiffin and D. B. O. Savile had been members of the Club since 1944. Both were given Honorary Memberships in 1983 and 1980, respectively. Dr. Clarence Frankton had been a member of the Club since 1946, and was given Honorary Membership in 1979.☐

The 122nd Annual Business Meeting

Fenja Brodo

The ABM was held on January 9, 2001 in Room 33 at the Canadian Museum of Nature. Thirty-one people attended. Eleanor Zurbrigg presided and Dave Smythe was recording secretary, filling in for John Martens.

The minutes of the 121st ABM, the Treasurer's Financial Report and the Report of Council were available before the 8:00 p.m. formal start of the meeting.

Last year's ABM minutes were accepted with minor corrections. Then, in response to a recommendation by Claudia Burns at the previous ABM, Eleanor Zurbrigg mentioned the pre-talk social time and the revolving participation of other committees at the monthly meetings to enhance the club experience for attendees.

Frank Pope reviewed the financial report, noting that Club assets had increased by \$8154. He explained that "other revenue" referred to funds raised by activities such as the Taverner Cup. A motion to approve the reappointment of Janet Gehr as Auditor for another year was approved.

Committee reports were presented by the respective chairs (or a representative). These were all approved with a single motion

Sarah Coulber, Ellaine Dickson, John Martens, Philip Martin, Jim Sutton and Dorothy Whyte are stepping down from Council. President Eleonor Zurbrigg thanked them for their participation in the Club's business. New members elected to Council are Irwin Brodo and John Cameron, otherwise the slate remains the same as last year.

New Business:

Philip Martin reminded us that this is the Year of the Volunteer and that Excursions and Lectures Committee needs volunteers.

Club members were alerted to a petition to protect Leitrim Wetlands.

Birds Committee Presentation:

This was the highlight of the evening. Bev Scott gave a beautifully illustrated and interesting account of the many and varied activities of the Birds Committee. It is the largest committee and it organizes Christmas and Fall Bird Counts and a subcommittee maintains a check list of rare birds. All this data is useful for understanding our resident birds and migration patterns and for assessing changes in these populations. The Committee organizes a Seedathon to supply the several local bird feeders, and cooperates in this and other aspects of birding with Le Club des Ornithologues de l'Outaouais. Birders will be working on the 2nd Breeding Bird Atlas and Club members were encouraged to participate, being promised lots of fun in the bargain. The Peregrine Falcon Watch, another important endeavour of the Birds Committee, will soon need volunteers at nesting time. The Taverner Cup, one of the local birding highlights in May and also draws birders from afar, and raises money for the Fletcher Wildlife Garden. Club members are invited to join the Birds Committee which meets on the last Monday of each month.

Guests Heather Hamilton and Sandy Parsons of the Eastern Ontario Biodiversity Museum in Kemptonville encouraged OFNC members to get involved in the Great Canadian Backyard Bird Count 2001 organized by Cornell University, with the local cooperation of the EOBM.

At 9:10 p.m. the meeting was formally adjourned and followed by refreshments and socializing among members. □

OFNC Committees for 2001

Frank Pope

The following OFNC committee members were approved by the Council at its meeting on February 13th. Committee members may be added during the year as approved by the Council. The members listed below will operate your club in 2001. Committee chairs appear in bold letters with their telephone numbers. Should you have any questions, comments, complaints or compliments pertaining to the operations of a committee, or should you desire to serve on a committee, please speak to a member of the relevant committee or give the chair a call.

AWARDS

Irwin Brodo
(723-2054)

Stephen Darbyshire
Christine Hanrahan
Sheila Thomson

BIRDS

Bev McBride
(827-8752)

Ken Allison
Colin Bowen
Laurie Consaul
Bruce Di Labio
Christine Hanrahan
Terry Higgins
Bernie Ladouceur
Christina Lewis
Daniel Perrier
Bev Peterkin
Gordon Pringle
Daniel St-Hilaire
Bev Scott
Colin Selby
Michael Tate
Eve Ticknor

BIRD RECORDS

(subcommittee)

Bruce Di Labio
(599-8733)

Colin Bowen
Mark Gawn
Bob Gorman
Paul Jones
Bernie Ladouceur
Gordon Pringle
Daniel St-Hilaire
Michael Tate
Chris Traynor

COMPUTER MANAGEMENT

Bob Roach (820-9587)
Stephen Bridgett
Sandra Garland
Alan German
Gordon Pringle

CONSERVATION

Stanley Rosenbaum
(596-4288)

Lynne Bricker
Janet Durno
Sharleen Hawco
David Hobden
Jennifer Leblanc
Philip Martin
Rita Morbia
Frank Pope
Bob Roach
Bill Royds
Adrianne Sinclair

EDUCATION & PUBLICITY

Pearl Peterkin
(747-2985)
John Cameron
Betty Campbell
Douglas Crombie
Terry Huzarski

EXCURSIONS & LECTURES

Roy John (748-9963)
Robina Bennett
Lee Cairnie
Eileen Evans
Rick Leavens
Philip Martin

FINANCE

Anthony Halliday
(230-3230)
Ron Bedford
David Burgess
Bill Cody
Frank Marth
Frank Pope
Louise Schwartz

FLETCHER WILDLIFE GARDEN

David Hobden (521-4145)
Claudia Burns
Sandra Garland
Maria MacRae

Taverner Cup
Jeff Harrison

Partner representatives

Janice Ife
Eric Moore
Penny Reed

MACOUN FIELD CLUB

Rob Lee (623-8123)
Martha Camfield
Laurie Consaul
Sarah Coulber
Barbara Gaertner
Diane Kitching
Joseph Potvin

MEMBERSHIP

Dave Smythe (592-3011)
Elisabeth Kanasy
Verna Smythe

NOMINATING

Colin Gaskell (728-4582)
Fenja Brodo
Dave Moore
Frank Pope

PUBLICATIONS

Ron Bedford (733-8826)
Fenja Brodo
Bill Cody
Francis Cook
Karen Hamilton
Elizabeth Morton
Joyce Reddoch ☐



FALL BIRD SIGHTINGS 2000

(SEPTEMBER 1 - NOVEMBER 20)

Chris Lewis

Bad weather often brings good birds. But this past fall, after a damp and dismal summer, the weather actually became quite pleasant...and good birds were found anyway, including several rarities.

RARE BIRD SIGHTINGS

The fall birding season started off well, with some rare shorebird sightings. A brief drop-in at Ottawa Beach (Andrew Haydon Park East) by 13 **Hudsonian Godwits** on September 2 was followed by other reports of this species at various locations such as Shirleys Bay and the High Falls Conservation Area in Casselman, until early October.

Also on September 2, another rare migrant appeared: 2 **Buff-breasted Sandpipers** were seen at the Embrun sewage lagoons. Yet another "Buffy" was found the following day in a field along Twin Elm Road off Barnsdale Road near the town of Richmond.

September 3 was also the date of the annual OFNC Seedathon, and the "Seedathon team" found a **Red Phalarope**, swimming side-by-side with a **Red-necked Phalarope** at the Embrun lagoons.

As the season progressed, other rarities included an adult winter-plumaged **Little Gull**, which lingered in the Des Chênes rapids at Britannia from September 13 - 18, and a **Glossy Ibis** on September 17 and 18 at the Alfred sewage lagoons. Alfred is just outside the 50 km radius of the Peace Tower, but it is always a productive birding location during spring and fall migration.

The best bird of October was a juvenile **Ross' Goose** (Oct 9), spotted on a pond along Moodie Drive south of the Trail Road Landfill Site. This was the 4th report of Ross' Goose in the 50 km in four consecutive years. The very young bird was in a plumage not usually seen in Ottawa; it was actually rather difficult to keep track of the bird, as in its resting posture it appeared more like a gull than a goose. (NOTE: the best illustration of this juvenile plumage can be found in the new "Sibley Guide to Birds" by David Allen Sibley). This goose

was reported again a few days later (October 11) in a field south of Ottawa, but there were no subsequent sightings.

A report of 3 **Cattle Egrets** at the Nepean Equestrian Park near Corkstown Road on the first weekend in November concluded the rare bird sightings for the period.

Aside from the rarities, there was plenty of great bird activity. As previously mentioned, the weather was surprisingly pleasant, with a few dynamic changes that kept things interesting.

LOONS, GREBES & HERONS

In the Month of October (and continuing into early November), there were more sightings of **Red-throated Loons** than any year in recent memory. Individuals were spotted on the Ottawa River from Shirleys Bay, Ottawa Beach and Britannia Point on at least five consecutive weekends. **Common Loons** on the River were regular, with at least eight seen on November 14.

Mud Lake in the Britannia Conservation Area was a reliable location for nesting **Pied-billed Grebes** up until two years ago. Since then, very few grebes have been seen there, and no nests have been reported. However, at the Moodie Drive pond this fall, at least 10 **Pied-billed's** (including juveniles) were seen on a single visit. It was subsequently revealed that several nests had been seen there during the summer. An early **Horned Grebe** was found a Shirleys Bay on September 3.

Britannia was still a good spot for **Black-crowned Night-herons**, a species that traditionally lingers at Mud Lake during fall dispersal/migration. Adults and immatures were present there in good numbers (with a high count of 12 on one visit) throughout September and October. The latest report was from the OFNC Mid-Fall Bird Count (October 21 -22).

Double-crested Cormorant numbers continue to increase every year on the Ottawa River, but it is not yet known if they are actually nesting in the 50 km.

WATERFOWL & RAILS

At some of the sewage lagoons east of Ottawa (Embrun and Alfred in particular), as well as at Shirleys Bay and Ottawa Beach, the low water levels provided excellent feeding habitat for water-birds.

Large numbers of migrating **Canada Geese** (including a **Richardson's Goose**, the mallard-sized subspecies) accumulated and persisted throughout the period, providing birders with the annual autumn spectacle of 1000's gathering

on the Ottawa River and virtually every other wet area and farm field in the district.

Snow Geese were seen in small groups. The largest number (41) in one day was found at the Winchester sewage lagoons on October 21. Interestingly, the numbers of **Greater Snow Geese** almost equalled the number of **Lessers** this season. The **Lesser Snow Goose** is the subspecies usually seen in Ottawa during migration. The first Ottawa record of the **Greater** subspecies was reported in 1986, and it remains an uncommon bird in Ottawa although, according to sources such as Ron Pittaway of the OFO (Ontario Field Ornithologists), occurrences are increasing west of Quebec due to adaptation to feeding in agricultural areas.

Small numbers of **Brant** were also found; the last report was from November 2, when four were seen at Ottawa Beach in addition to a lone lingerer the same day at Shirleys Bay.

The common puddle ducks were well-represented. **Ruddy Ducks** continue to increase in the area. At least 25 were seen at Alfred (September 26) and almost every sizeable pond, particularly the eastern lagoons, had at least a Ruddy or two.

The reported numbers of bay and sea ducks were somewhat lower than in recent years. However, there were a few exceptional sightings...an unusually early group of 10 **White-winged Scoters** was seen on September 3, and a very large flock of 270 male **Black Scoters** was observed on Lac Des Chênes on October 15. Another group of 41 male **Black Scoters** put in a surprise appearance at the Greely Sand & Gravel Pit on the Old Prescott Road the same week. On November 5, a seemingly endless stream of at least 1500 **Greater Scaup** (again, all males) were flying at high altitude over the Ottawa River west of Andrew Haydon Park. A pair of **Redheads** raised a family at the Moodie Drive pond (they were still being seen well into September), and a late **Canvasback** was found on the Ottawa River off Grandview Drive on October 22.

Common Goldeneye numbers were up to par for the season, and the first fall sighting of **Barrow's Goldeneye** was at Remic Rapids (November 4). A beautiful adult male has stuck around as **Barrow's** have done in winters past. Hopefully this bird will also stay awhile for birders to enjoy.

Rail species were plentiful in the early part of the period. At least 75 **American Coots** were found at the Alfred lagoons on September 30, and a good number of **Common Moorhens** were also seen there.

And what Ottawa-area fall bird report would be complete without the **Sandhill Cranes** which have been known to nest in the Mer Bleue / Alfred Bog for many years? The first fall sighting was on September 30, when a pair was found near the Alfred Bog boardwalk. They were not reported again until November 9, when a flock of **30 (28 adults and 2 immatures)** were seen feeding in the fields along Milton Road near Navan, a traditional area for "Crane-spotting". This is probably the largest number of Sandhill Cranes ever seen on one day in the 50 km.

SHOREBIRDS

In spite of the availability of excellent feeding habitat, there were no huge shorebird numbers this season. The flight-friendly weather may have been partially responsible, as well as the presence of raptors (especially Cooper's Hawks, Merlins and Peregrine Falcons) on the Ottawa River and at the eastern lagoons. However, decent numbers of **Black-bellied and Semipalmated Plover, Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, Sanderling, Semipalmated and Least Sandpiper, White-rumped, Baird's, and Pectoral Sandpiper, Dunlin and Common Snipe** were seen into late October. Small numbers of **American Golden Plover** were found at the Embrun lagoons in late September. A **Red-necked Phalarope** lingered at Embrun in early September, and was seen on several occasions (including its brief "partnership" with the **Red Phalarope** on September 3).

GULLS

Lesser Black-backed Gulls began appearing at the Moodie Drive pond and the Trail Road Landfill Site in early October. Formerly a rare species in Ottawa, it is rapidly becoming an annually "expected" bird here in winter; three were seen at the landfill ("The Dump") on November 17. A **Thayer's Gull** was discovered at Ottawa Beach on Oct. 8, followed by two more at The Dump in November. Reports of the "white-winged" gulls (**Iceland and Glaucous**) increased dramatically after a spell of cold weather in mid-November. A very late **Bonaparte's Gull** was seen at Shirleys Bay on the Remembrance Day weekend.

RAPTORS

The raptor story of the year in Ottawa was **Merlins!** In late spring of 2000, at least 5 known nests were discovered, and several more suspected. The first known Merlin nest was found in 1997 in the Britannia woods, and since then these impressive little falcons seem to have exploded in the 50 km, especially in urban areas. On September 3, there were five sightings of Merlins in wide-spread locations, compared to 3 sightings of **American Kestrel**...normally an odd ratio, but not really surprising this year! The adults and their offspring continued to assert their presence until late October.

Peregrine Falcons nested successfully for the 4th consecutive year on the Crowne Plaza Hotel in downtown Ottawa. A great effort was put in once again by the OFNC volunteers who monitored this year's family of two adults and three young. Unfortunately, only one youngster survived. The last report of the downtown Peregrines comes from October 30 -- the adult female "Horizon" was still being seen on the hotel, whereas her mate "Connor" and their only surviving son "Freedom" had left at least two weeks before then. More recently in the fall period, an immature Peregrine (identity unknown) was observed resting and preening on a sand-pile at the pond on Moodie Drive (November 19).

The Mid-Fall Bird Count produced late sightings of **Turkey Vulture**, **Osprey** and **Red-shouldered Hawk**. **Rough-legged Hawks** and **Northern Harriers** were present in good numbers in October as well. **Two immature Bald Eagles** were observed on October 8 from Shirleys Bay, and an **adult** was seen from Ottawa Beach on November 5.

The first **Snowy Owl** of the season was reported in late October, and in early November more Snowy's began to show up in various locations, such as the Nepean Equestrian Park (November 7) and the Ottawa River (November 11 and 12). Other owl reports of interest were 14 **Northern Saw-whet Owls** banded at the Innis Point Bird Observatory October 21- 22. This is the first year in which owl-banding was attempted at Innis Point, and if the Saw-whet numbers are any indication, future endeavours should prove very interesting. Single Saw-whet Owls were also discovered by an agitated group of **Ruby-crowned Kinglets** and **Hermit Thrushes** at Britannia on October 9, as well as by birders in the Clyde Avenue Woods the following day.

An owl species which has been absent from the area for the past two years appears to have invaded again...a **Northern Hawk Owl** was seen on Riddell Road near the 6th Line, followed by three sightings on November 9 -- all on the same day, all in different locations (Arnprior, Cumberland and Merrickville). There were many reports of Hawk Owls from all over southern Ontario in October and November, from diverse locations such as Brockville, Chatham and Orillia.

WOODPECKERS & OTHER NON-PASSERINES

Since the ice-storm of 1998, sightings of "northern" woodpeckers have increased, especially in the environs of the Constance Creek wetland complex. River Road, which passes through part of this area, is bordered by stands of white pine and black spruce, and the ice-storm damage to these conifers has attracted insects, which in turn have attracted both **Three-toed** and **Black-**

backed Woodpeckers. This fall, both species returned and were found again along River Road in late October and November.

In other unusually late sightings, **Tree, Barn, and Northern Rough-winged Swallows** were seen during the last week of October.

PASSERINES

The first week of September proved to be very rewarding for birders seeking migrating songbirds. In fact, the Labour Day weekend was one of the year's best weekends for fall passerine migration, closely matching a similarly excellent spring migration weekend in mid-May 2000.

Between midnight and dawn on September 3, **650 Swainson's Thrushes, 275 Veerys and 2 Gray-cheeked Thrushes** were heard calling as they flew over .

The warblers were also amazing on September 3. In the Britannia Conservation Area alone, a total of **20 species of warblers** were seen. The discovery of large numbers of some species (e.g., **55 Magnolia** and **10 Wilson's Warblers** in a two-hour visit to Britannia) made for an exciting day. The mild overcast weather with occasional drizzle certainly contributed to the high level of bird activity that weekend.

The mild weather may also have been responsible for the late sighting of an **Eastern Towhee** on October 22 in the area of Fitzroy Harbour.

Red-breasted Nuthatches, scarce last fall and winter, have been abundant and widespread this season, as were **Fox Sparrows** during their usual brief window of appearance in the month of October. The first **Snow Buntings** are always a sign that winter is imminent, and this year they began to arrive on schedule. A less common species, **Lapland Longspur**, was also being seen as of late October; a total of 33 were found on the Mid-Fall Bird Count.

A question that birders may be asking themselves, as the end of the year approaches, is: will this be a winter for **Crossbills** and other finches? If this year's heavy cone-crops on the white pines, white spruces and hemlocks are any indication, it may turn out to be an excellent year for a "winter finch" invasion.....

Stay tuned, and keep your eyes to the skies!

The bird reports in this article were derived from various sources, including the OFNC Bird Status Line and internet postings on the OFO listserv ONTBIRDS, as well as personal sightings and communications. Thanks to all birders who contributed their observations.

To report bird sightings in the Ottawa area, please call the Bird Status Line at 825-1231. To hear about recent reports, call 860-9000. To subscribe to ONTBIRDS on the internet, the address is *Majordomo@hcwn.org*

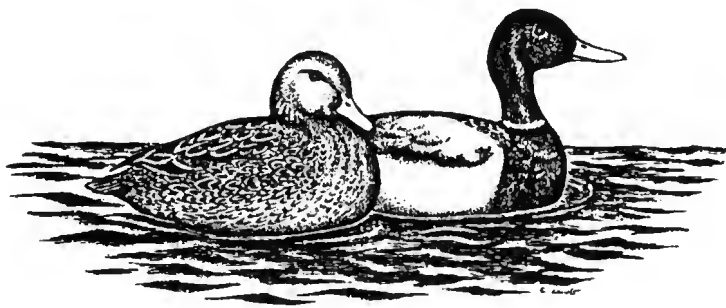
For more information about the Seedathon, the Mid-Fall Bird Count, and other birding-related events in the Ottawa area, watch for announcements in future issues of *T&L*, and also check the OFNC Website at <http://www.achilles.net.ofnc/index.htm> □

BIRD WATCHING AT SHIRLEYS BAY

Frank Pope

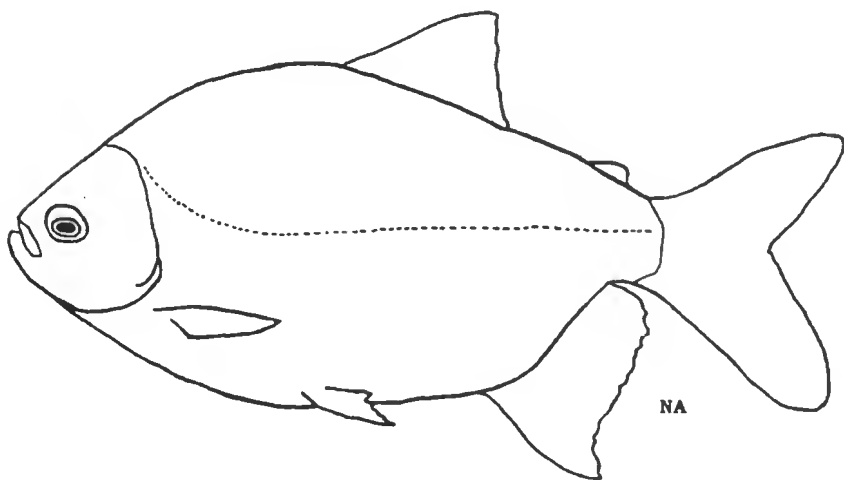
I am pleased to report that the Club has been able to renew the contract with the Connaught Range for access by our members to the berm, Chartrand Island and Haycock Island, all on DND property. The islands may be explored only when there is no shooting at all on the Range but beware of the poison ivy.

Anyone wishing to access this prime birding spot should call the Range Control Office at 991-5740 (working hours) or 991-5881 (after hours). Should you find yourself in the area without a telephone, visit the Range Control Office. To reach it, enter the Range and turn right after you cross Watts Creek. You will see the office on your right.



A pacu/piranha in the Rideau Canal

Claude B. Renaud and Anne Phelps



A schematic drawing of a generalized pacu/piranha, subfamily Serrasalminae

The article we recently wrote (Renaud and Phelps 1999) on the dumping of oscar fish in the Rideau Canal attracted the attention of Hedrik Wachelka, President of the Ottawa Chapter of Muskies Canada. He contacted the first author with some news of yet another example of an exotic fish finding its way into the Rideau Canal.

On Sunday, 23 October 1994, Hedrik and his daughter Anik were strolling along the eastern shoreline of Dow's Lake, an enlargement of the Rideau Canal, opposite Queen Elizabeth Driveway in downtown Ottawa. The water level in the canal had been lowered for the winter and in the shallow water Anik spotted a dead fish, which she described as "a funny looking carp". Hedrik took a closer look and determined that the fish was about 12-14 inches (30-35 cm) long and that it had piranha-like teeth. After contemplating

whether to take the fish with them and notify the authorities, the smell made them opt for taking a photograph instead.

Our identification of the fish is therefore based on Mr. Wachelka's description and the study of his photograph. The photograph shows a robust, deep-bodied fish lying with its left side exposed to the air. It has a small terminal mouth and on its back are two fins; an anterior membranous dorsal fin supported by fin rays and a posterior fleshy dorsal fin, properly called an adipose fin. The tail fin is broad and distinctly forked. The photograph also shows that the fish is in an advanced state of decomposition with its left eye missing from its orbit and discoloration of the skin over much of the body surface.

A number of native fishes from the Ottawa region possess an adipose fin. The bullhead catfishes (family Ictaluridae), the smelts (Osmeridae), the trouts (Salmonidae) and the trout-perch (Percopsidae) have this distinction. None of these however, have a deep body and therefore, can be immediately rejected.

Based on the body shape and the possession of an adipose fin, the fish belongs to the subfamily Serrasalminae (family Characidae), a diverse assemblage of freshwater fishes, native to South America and popular in the aquarium trade. According to Nelson (1994), this subfamily comprises about 60 species and includes the fruit-eating pacus and the carnivorous piranhas. Pacus and piranhas are difficult to tell apart even when you have a specimen in hand to study. There are numerous cases of pacus reported as piranhas and *vice versa* (Nico 1999-2000). Both piranhas and pacus possess large, robust teeth in their upper and lower jaws. The presence of "piranha-like" teeth therefore, does not help distinguish between the two groups. Distinguishing characteristics between pacus and piranhas have more to do with body size and the fact that pacus have two rows of teeth in their jaws rather than a single row of teeth, as in the piranhas. Depending on the species, piranhas can reach standard lengths of 20 to 40 cm (from tip of snout to where the tail bends) and weights of about 2 kg, whereas pacus can attain 90 cm in standard length and a weight of 30 kg (Nico 1999-2000). Based on the limited information available to us, we can only say that the fish from the Rideau Canal was either a pacu or a piranha.

By consulting the internet posted website on nonindigenous aquatic species, maintained by the United States Geological Survey, we find that at least three species of pacus and two species of piranhas have been introduced in the United States and numerous other reports in the USA are simply listed as either unidentified pacus or piranhas (Nico 1999-2000). All these reports are probable aquarium releases and the impact of these introductions is unknown (Nico 1999-2000). Taken collectively, pacus and piranhas have been reported from no less than 33 states: Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, California,

Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Texas, Virginia, Washington and Wisconsin). The record from Wisconsin was not listed in Nico (1999-2000) but was based on a report in the Zebra Mussel Update (<http://www.seagrant.wisc.edu/publications/ZMU/archive/00000130.html>).

Courtenay *et al.* (1991) and Mandrak and Crossman (1992) have reported the presence of a pacu, *Colossoma bidens* (= *Piaractus brachypomus*), in Ontario waters but do not state the precise locality. Erling Holm of the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, (personal communication, 20 Dec. 2000) informed us that the ROM has a record of a pacu angled from Lisgar Lake, Oxford County, Ontario, on 17 July 1990 (Accession no. 5732). This specimen is presumably the basis for the listing in the above publications. Another Ontario pacu was angled in the Thames River, London, on 2 Aug. 1991 (ROM Acc. No. 5840). The Globe and Mail, on 31 July 1999 (Mittelstaedt 1999) reported on two pacus caught in Ontario by anglers, one in the Otonabee River in Peterborough, the week previous and another one in the Napanee River. The latter specimen was caught by trolling on 19 July 1999 (ROM Acc. No. 6708). The News section in the Sept. 1998 issue of Environmental Science and Engineering (<http://www.esemag.com/0998/news.html>) gives additional information on the fish from the Otonabee River. It was actually caught in 1998, not 1999, as was reported in the Globe and Mail; it measured about 38 cm long and was identified as a red pacu, *Piaractus brachypomus*, by Paul Tilley, owner of a fish and aquarium store. The News section also mentions a red-bellied piranha, *Pygocentrus nattereri*, caught in Professor's Lake, Brampton, Ontario, during the summer of 1998. This single fish cost the City of Brampton over \$5000 in consulting fees and several thousands of dollars in lost revenues due to beach closures. The two-page fact sheet entitled *Aquarium Hobbyists – You Can Help the Environment*, produced by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, the Canadian Association of Aquarium Clubs, the Royal Ontario Museum, the Toronto Zoo, the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters and Fisheries and Oceans Canada, stated that four pacus were caught by anglers in Ontario in 1999.

Although not attaining the high levels encountered in the USA, fish introductions in Canada, and notably in Ontario, are significant enough to cause concern. We strongly advise against introducing non-native fishes into our local waters. We believe the best way to prevent further introductions is through increased public awareness of the potential environmental damage these fishes can cause. Accordingly, the dissemination of a fact sheet on this

matter by the above six organizations is a good step in the right direction. To obtain a copy, contact the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters, P.O. Box 2800, Peterborough ON, K9J 8L5, (705) 748-6324. To find a home for an unwanted aquarium pet, contact the Canadian Association of Aquarium Clubs (www.caoac.on.ca) at (905) 682-2991 or call the toll-free Invading Species Hotline at 1-800-563-7711.

Acknowledgments

Our thanks to Dr. Alison Murray, Canadian Museum of Nature, for a helpful discussion on the dentition of pacus and piranhas and to Noel Alfonso, of the same institution, for producing the figure.

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My Week at the Youth Naturalist Camp with the Federation of Ontario Naturalists

Julian Potvin-Bernal

Member, Macoun Club Juniors/Intermediates

Last summer, thanks to OFNC sponsorship, I participated in a week-long nature camp for about 20 kids between the ages of 10 and 15, organized by the Federation of Ontario Naturalists (FON). The camp is hosted by the Leslie M. Frost Natural Resources Centre, a training institution run by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources. It is located in Haliburton County southwest of Algonquin Park, on the shore of Lake St. Nora, which is at the edge of a two thousand acre forest.

There's much to tell, since this camp was six days long. In this article, I will try to describe some of the activities in a way that shows how FON goes about helping kids to learn about ecology.

One of the first activities was to find particular trees using a map and a "dichotomous" (branching) key of characteristics. The point was to find each tree and figure out the species using the key. It was a good way to work on tree identification, and to get to know the layout of the grounds around the Centre.

Later, we were split into two groups. One went to a small shelter with Chris, a staff member there, and tested the amount of oxygen in the water by taking a sample and adding indicator substances. Then we went down to a small beach to look for aquatic creatures. We didn't find many. During this time the other group went with Hillary on a pontoon boat to test water quality, visibility, temperature and a few other things too. After about half an hour we switched activities. On my boat ride I saw zooplankton that looked like tiny white fluffy globs. Either my group was not very good at finding creatures, or the creatures weren't very good at finding us! When we came back from the boat ride, the other group had found lots: baby catfish, a few dragonfly larvae, a water scorpion, and many other things. I guess those kids were more attractive!

Another afternoon we went to a wetland loaded with pitcher plants and sundews, all kinds of sedges and shrubs, and lots of tamaracks. We followed a boardwalk to the center of the wetland. We each got a paper with a series of questions, one of which was: "What kind of wetland is this?" Actually, half of

this wetland is a “bog”, and the other half is a “fen”. The main difference is that bogs are acid, and fens are alkaline. Also bogs are likely to have sphagnum moss, pitcher plants and shrubs, while fens are likely to have large amounts of sedges and no sphagnum. Kim, our guide, had a tool for taking peat from about two and a half meters underground. Peat down at that level is about 2,500 years old. It’s dark brown with a few little fragments of leaves and sticks. It was very wet and it stank like rotting compost. (Actually, that’s what it is!)

During the second evening, Hillary brought the group to a computer room for an activity called “Birds and Bytes”. This software application starts with a map of Canada. The user clicks on a province to get a list of birds living in that province. Clicking on the name of a bird shows photographs, videos, and sound clips of that bird’s song or call, and even the graph of the sound wave of its call. This was an interesting way to work on bird identification because the video and sound provide more clues than a regular field guide. There was also a type of quiz where you have to figure out the name of a bird by its photo, its call, or the graph.

One morning we set off on a day-long canoe trip to an old growth forest at Little Hawk Lake. We had a few tools that I had not seen before. One was a drill for taking a thin core out of a tree to find out its age. The core is a long thin strip of wood taken out of the side of the tree. We counted how many rings to know the age of the tree. Later we put the core back into its tunnel in the side of the tree, which lets the tree grow over the scar again. Another tool we used was a type of drill for taking soil samples about half a meter deep within the ground. The soil sample would help us to describe the habitat. For example, the old growth forest didn’t look like such an old forest. This one had very small trees. When we did the soil check, Ian, the main leader for the camp, said that there was just a very thin layer of rich soil. The rest was very sandy. Since the trees could not get many nutrients, hemlocks, and cedars which made up most of the forest were less than a foot thick in diameter. There were also many mounds and dips all over the forest because when old trees fell over years ago, the roots would bring up the soil. This would create a dip, then eventually the tree would rot and turn into soil. Its roots would make a mound, making the terrain very uneven.

During the whole six days, the camp leaders kept asking us interesting questions, and helping us with the answers. Since I’ve learned so much from Macoun Club, which I have been participating in for four years, sometimes I felt the explanations were a little too general -- not that I didn’t learn anything! I learned lots, but I think I wanted more detail. Maybe Macouners are like that!

One of my favourite times was even before I arrived. On the way through Algonquin Park, my family and I stopped to find William Godsoe and Katherine Kitching, two former Macoun Club Seniors, who were working at the Park Visitors' Centre. William showed us some of the insect collections they had. It was very interesting to see under the microscope, a few minuscule wasps that were just a millimeter long, and which William has been studying. We attended one of the childrens' presentations that Katherine helped in. Later, she showed us a baby sparrow some visitors had found alone in the park and brought to the Center staff. Katherine and others have been looking after it, feeding it, and preparing to let it go.□

The Doug Tarry Bird Study Awards for Young Ornithologists

Long Point Bird Observatory

A week-long workshop in field ornithology is provided free to six selected, lucky applicants, 13-17 years old. Awards cover all direct costs of the workshop (accommodation, meals, travel while at Long Point, and professional instruction), but recipients are responsible for their transportation to and from Long Point. This is a unique opportunity for like-minded teenagers to markedly enhance their knowledge and skills in the scientific study and aesthetic enjoyment of birds.

The workshop/natural history camp is held at Long Point Bird Observatory located on the north shore of Lake Erie, Ontario. This year it will take place from **Friday 27 July to Friday 3 August 2001**. Prospective participants are invited to request an application form from: Landbird Programs Coordinator, Bird Studies Canada/Long Point Bird Observatory, P. O. Box 160, Port Rowan, Ontario N0E 1M0 (519-586-2885), email lpbo@bsc-eoc.org, website www.bse.eoc.org.

Applications are due 1 May 2001.

RESULTS OF THE TAVERNER CUP BIRDING COMPETITION

Jeff Harrison



Taverner Cup Winning Team, from l-r: Leonard Lee, Murray Borer, Peter Burke, Colin Jones, Don Sutherland, and Mike Runtz.

Birding competitions which raise money for environmental projects and give participants an excuse to spend up to 24 hours in the field have become a widely accepted practice in many countries. Since the early 1980s events such as the World Series of Birding in America and the Twitchathon in Australia have grown to become major events on the birding calendar. In Canada we hope that the Taverner Cup, organized by our Club to assist the Fletcher Wildlife Garden and other projects in eastern Ontario, will find similar success.

On May 26th, 2000, 73 participants in 18 teams, 6 competitive, and 12 recreational, competed in the 4th Annual Taverner Cup. This corporate-sponsored birding event was held in eastern Ontario and western Quebec over a 24 hour period. The temperatures were in the low 20s, overcast to sunny with light winds which picked up in the afternoon. Despite cool temperatures, especially in the north, which somewhat dampened the dawn chorus, a dearth of passerines at the migrant traps, and few migrant waterfowl, a record total of 221 species were seen.

The Lee Valley Sawbills, captained by Mike Runtz, of Arnprior, with fellow birders Colin Jones, Don Sutherland, Peter Burke and driver Murray Borer won the Taverner Cup with a total of 183 species. Last years winner, the The Bushnell Nighthawks, captained by Ottawa native Bruce Di Labio was a close second with 181 species. Focus Scientific Merlins, captained by Tony Beck of Ottawa, placed third with 163 species.



Winners of the Fothergill Trophy, from l-r: Rob Copeland, Judy Randall with OFNC president, Eleanor Zurbrigg.

The Barrie Mightly Ducks, captained by Judy Randall and fellow birders Rob Copeland and Jen Simpson, won the recreational category, and the Fothergill Trophy, with a total of 148 species. The Motherflickers, captained by Chris Lewis of Ottawa, placed second with 140 species. They won the Judith Wilks Trophy. The Flying Dodos, captained by Rob Pinilla (Ottawa) came third with 131 species. Teams came from as far away as Fredericton, N.B., Chatham, Barrie and Toronto. Complete team results are detailed below.

The winning teams strategy included a full 24 hours in the field starting with accipiters on nests, owls, and marsh birds in the Peterborough area, then in order, Carden Alvar, Algonquin Provincial Park (dawn), Springbrook Alvar, Presqu'île Provincial Park, Chaffeys Lock, north of Kingston, a very brief visit to the Ottawa area, and finally the sewage lagoons in far eastern Ontario. The next three competitive teams started in Ottawa then went to Algonquin and from that point followed a route similar to Mike's.

About 100 people, including participants, their sponsors, and invited guests, attended the Awards Banquet. It was held in Ottawa in the cafeteria of the Sir John Carling Building on Sunday morning May 28th. The event was hosted by the OFNC and the Fletcher Wildlife Garden. Steve Wendt, Director of the Migratory Birds Conservation Division of the Canadian Wildlife Service, proved an artful Master of Ceremonies. The banquet was catered by Dave Smith of The Place Next Door. Mike Runtz and his team were presented with the Taverner Cup by Steve Wendt. The Fothergill Trophy was presented to Judy Randall by Eleanor Zurbrigg, President of the Ottawa Field-Naturalists Club. Team captain, Joan Molnar of the Jaywalkers, a close friend of Judith Wilks, presented the Wilks Trophy to Chris Lewis.

There were many birding highlights including: Red-throated Loon, Great Egret, Black Scoter, Red-necked Phalarope, Stilt, Red Knot, and Orchard Oriole at Presqu'île Provincial Park and Spruce Grouse, Black-backed Woodpecker, a Three-toed Woodpecker with chick, Gray Jay, Common Raven, Boreal Chickadee, Orange-crowned Warbler, Lincolns Sparrow and Junco at Algonquin Provincial Park. The Springbrook and Newburgh alvars provided fine birding with similar birds such as Shrike, Black-billed Cuckoo; Upland Sandpiper, Grasshopper and Clay-coloured Sparrows. A nesting Raven, Yellow-throated Vireo, Golden-winged and Cerulean Warblers, Louisiana Waterthrush and Gnatcatcher were a few of the many significant birds recorded in what may be Ontario's finest non-migrant trap birding site, Chaffeys Lock.

Merlin, Peregrine Falcon, Arctic Tern, four species of owl, Red-headed Woodpecker, Mockingbird, Pipit and Yellow-breasted Chat were recorded in the

Ottawa area. The Alfred Sewage Lagoons, arguably the best in Ontario, once again provided sterling birding and a must stop for competitive teams. The long list of birds recorded over the course of the day included White-winged Scoter (flying over), Sora Rail, Marbled Godwit, Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, Golden Plover, Pintail, Shoveler, Gadwall, Wigeon, Redhead, and Ruddy Duck.



Winners of the Judith Wilks Memorial Trophy, from l-r: Jeanne McGugan, Laurie Consaul, Bev McBride, Chris Lewis and Joan Molnar

Other records of interest included a Mountain Bluebird at Hilton, Blue-winged Warbler at Springbrook, increased numbers of Sedge Wrens, widespread sightings of Wild Turkeys especially north of Brighton, and increasing numbers of nesting Merlins and Cooper's Hawks within the City of Ottawa. Lingering migrants of note were a Rough-legged Hawk near Portland and White-crowned Sparrows at Presqu'île and Ottawa. Perhaps the most interesting experience of the day belonged to Judy Randall's team at Presqu'île Provincial Park. At 1:00 AM, immediately after imitating a Screech Owl, they were buzzed by a Short-eared Owl. Most other participants are finding their own unique and memorable sightings!

Increased scouting in traditional and new areas, better route selection, and the sharing of information about uncommon birds, one of the cornerstones of the Taverner Cup competition, is having a very positive effect on team totals. The organizers feel that the next time the competition coincides with a strong passerine migration, experienced teams will have a legitimate shot at 200 species on the day.

The final team results for 2000 are as follows:

COMPETITIVE

Team Name	Captain	Corporate Sponsor	Total Species
Sawbills	Mike Runtz	Lee Valley Tools	183
Nighthawks	Bruce Di Labio	Bushnell Sports Optics	181
Merlins	Tony Beck	Focus Scientific	163
Great Grey Owls	Jeff Harrison	Wild Birds Unlimited	159
Goatsuckers	Chris Michener	Our Natural World	147
Outaouais	Daniel St-Hilaire	City of Aylmer (Que)	130

RECREATIONAL

Team Name	Captain	Residences	Total Species
Barrie Mighty Ducks	Judy Randall	Barrie	148
The Motherflickers	Chris Lewis	Ottawa	140
The Flying Dodos	Rob Pinilla	Ottawa-Toronto	131
The Redneck Phalaropes	Martha Robinson	Brighton-Toronto	124
Harlequins	Christine Cornel	Fredericton-Ottawa	122
Birdbrains	Tim Brophy	Ottawa	122
The Roadrunners	Brett Groves	Chatham	118
Tweachers	Janet Castle	Ottawa	115
Outaouais Buteos	Garry McNulty	Ottawa	106
Pileated Flycatchers	Phill Atwood	Embrun-Lanark	96
The Counting Crows	Stephane Guillot	Gatineau-Ottawa	69
Jaywalkers	Joan Molner	Ottawa	62

The purpose of the Taverner Cup is to raise money for environmental projects and to raise awareness of the great diversity and richness of wildlife habitats in eastern Ontario and western Quebec. Plans are under way to create an eco-tourism-related Birding Trail which would run on public roadways through eastern Ontario. The Trail is intended to provide a marketing umbrella for the Taverner Cup, existing bird and wildlife festivals and the many fine seasonal wildlife viewing sites. This trail concept has worked beautifully in Texas and is now being widely adopted in many areas of the United States.

The co-ordinator offers a special thanks to all our sponsors whose support has made the Taverner Cup possible. They deserve our support and patronage. A big thanks also to the birders who participated this year. Thanks are also extended to Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada for providing the banquet venue, Ken Allison who again designed the artwork for our T-shirt, Chris Michener of Lifer Bird Gear of Golden Lake, Martha Robinson of Brighton, the Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club for providing prizes at the banquet, and finally to Christine Hanrahan, Greg Kelly, Eve Ticknor and Judy Hall who helped out with the species collation and at the banquet.

The Fifth Annual Taverner Cup will take place this year on Saturday May 26th. Information about this event is available on our website: www.web-nat.com/taverner/. Requests for literature can be made through the website or by contacting me directly.

Complete information packages are now available. Deadline for entry is May 16. Details about the birding trail are also available from me.

Hope to see you this year!

Jeff Harrison Coordinator 150 Wolseley Avenue North Montreal West, PQ H4X 1V9 (514) 486-4943 Email: dha@videotron.ca.

2001 FALCON WATCH

*Eve Ticknor,
Coordinator, OFNC Peregrin Falcon Street Watch*

Once again we are looking for volunteers to help with the Falcon Watch Crew. Help is needed in June and July to monitor the fledging stage of young Peregrine Falcon chicks. This is done in groups, in shifts, 7 days a week for whatever time you can give. If you can help, please contact me at 737-7551 or by e-mail at sandbird@magma.ca. We offer training and an opportunity to learn more about these wonderful birds, make new friends and renew old acquaintances☐

Very Tall Trees Found at Chelsea, Quebec

Pierre Landry



Figure 1. The tallest Eastern White Pine at Chelsea.

During the 19th century the Gatineau River valley was legendary for the richness of its pine forests. Nowadays that legend is just a memory, except notably at Chelsea (45°31'N 75°47'W) where a small stand of "old growth" is preserved. Here, in a pinery of about 30 Eastern White Pines (*Pinus strobus*), the tallest tree measures 40.5 m (133 ft). Some other specimens reach 35 m (115 ft) or slightly more. Their narrow crowns with very slender trunks (diameter mostly less than 80 cm) create a "cathedral" atmosphere, and during windy days there is poetry in the wide swinging of the trees and the intensive



Figure 2. Buttressed base and partly shingled bark of the tallest *Pinus strobus* at Chelsea.

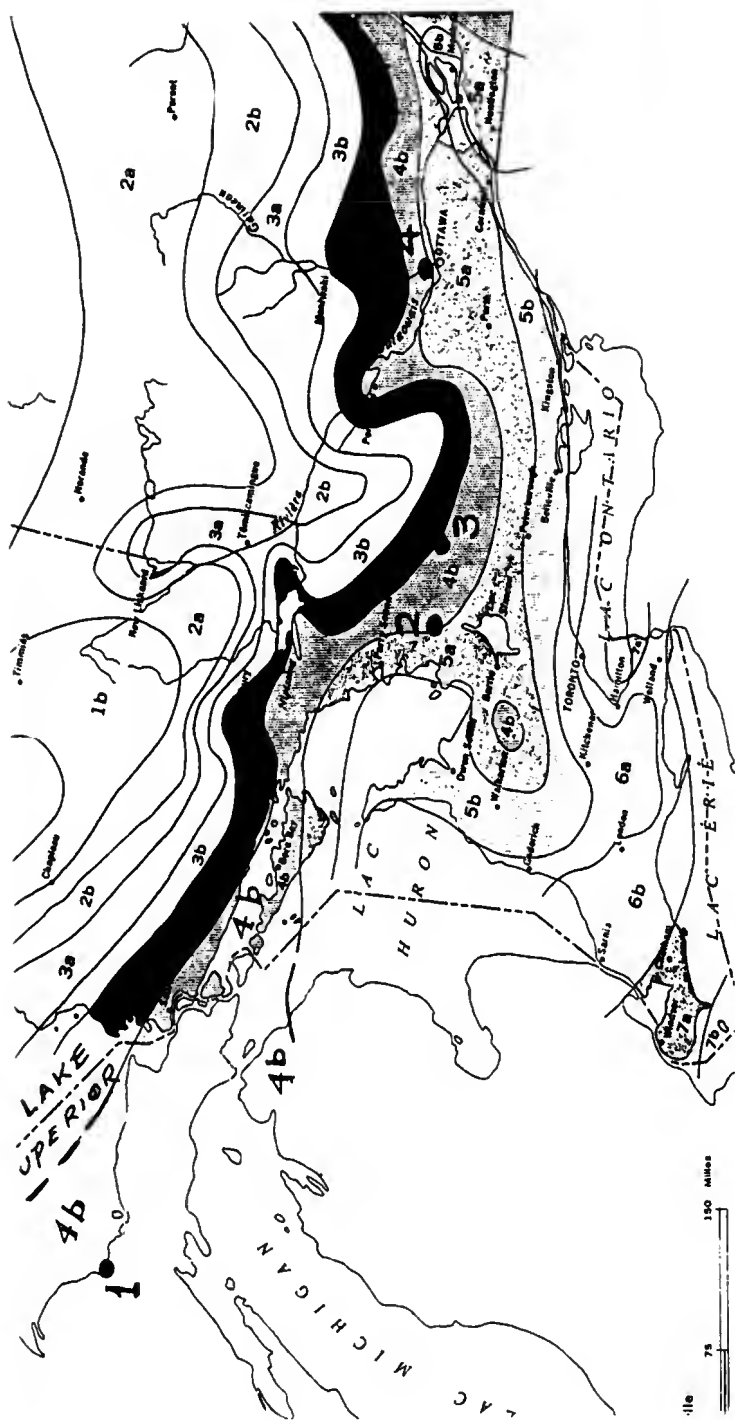
murmur of the needles. Such impressive splendour is due to two main ecological factors: 1) a very rich and deep soil of antique alluvial origin, 2) good protection from wintry north winds by a knob of land to the north of this pinery.

This remarkable pinery has been left intact since 1935. Its owner, Hydro Quebec, has good conservation practices.

The tallest tree featured here has been measured twice. In 1996 it stood at 40.1 m (131.5 ft) and in 2000 it had grown to 40.5 m (133 ft). During those four years it grew 0.4 m, that is 0.1 m or 4" per year.

If lightning bolts or gale winds do not kill it soon, or if freezing rains do not break its top, this over mature tree could perhaps attain 45 m by the year 2050.

Figure 2 shows the distinctive trunk and bark morphology of this tall pine which could be 200 years old or more. The diameter at breast height (that is 1.37 m above ground) is only 0.72 m or 28". At ground level we see strong buttressing. The bark is more or less shingled. This characterizes over maturity. On the right, one sees a blackened streak which is damage caused by numerous lightning bolts.



Locations of the four large Eastern White Pines: 1-Marquette, Michigan; 2-Macauley Township, Ontario; 3-Haliburton County, Ontario; 4-Chelsea, Quebec.

Within eastern Canada the tallest Eastern White Pine is in Haliburton County, Ontario. Its height is 45.1 m (148 ft) (Honour Roll of Ontario Trees 1993, page 1). In the same report (page 2) there is mention of another specimen reaching 43.0 m (141 ft) at nearby Macauley Township. The Chelsea pine is now the third tallest.

In eastern USA, the crowned champion Eastern White Pine is near Marquette, Michigan, a town by the south shore of Lake Superior. This tree was measured at 61.3 m (201 ft) and is considered to be the tallest tree alive in eastern North America (National Register of big trees, p. 39 1998-1999).

The map shows the location of the four big Eastern White Pines. Notice that all four of these trees are situated in the plant hardiness zone 4b. (Extension of this zone into the USA is approximated.) Moreover, the geographic latitudes

are similar ($45^{\circ}00'$ to $46^{\circ}30'N$) and the longitudinal differences are narrow ($75^{\circ}00'$ to $87^{\circ}30'W$).



Figure 3. A unique double-trunked basswood (*Tilia americana*) at Chelsea QU.

Basswoods and beeches also grow well at Chelsea. The pinery is surrounded by a large Sugar Maple grove and a beech wood. At the northern end of the maple grove, a unique double-trunked basswood (Figure 3) attained 37.2m (122 ft) before the January 1998 ice storm. As is often the case for old basswoods, the top part of the right hand trunk was formed

into a rounded crown from which protruded a lone, vertical and fragile shoot which added a few metres to the height of the tree. The ice storm broke off this shoot, unfortunately.



Figure 4. American Beech (*Fagus grandifolia*) measured at 31.69 m.

In the beech wood, situated adjacent and to the northeast of the pinery, two noble specimens of the American Beech (*Fagus grandifolia*) surpassed 30 m, (33.1 m or 109 ft and 31.7 m or 104 ft). Figure 4 shows the impressive size of the beech measured at 31.69 m. In January 1998, the tops of these trees were badly broken.

For the latest information regarding the bioclimatic location of Chelsea, I recommend the map with descriptions by Saucier *et al.* 1998.

Acknowledgments

I take this occasion to thank all periodical editors, past and present, for important help and suggestions.

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Ode to Newfoundland

Charles J. Saso

I left my heart in Old Newfoundland
Along the ponds and rocky shores
To be where Terns and Seagulls fly
Up high in Gros Morne's sky.
The morning mist may chill the air
I don't care
My heart is there
In fair Newfoundland.
In Tablelands
Killdevil Lodge
Among the fishin' villages
sandy beach and windswept coast.
The cool night air
It sure is fair
way out there
Upon the Rock
Out on the east coast
Where Ospreys glide
And Moose do roam.
Where little children play
And dories bob and sway
Among the waves
and glistening seas.
When I come back to you old Newfoundland
Your way of life
Will charm again! □

The “Blob”

Jack Holliday



This last summer of the twentieth century, with its frequent rains, produced the lushest lawns in memory in the Ottawa area. Cutting the lawn every five days was the norm. After one such cutting, I was returning the mower to the garage when my eyes spotted a “blob” on the aluminum siding of the house. About the size and shape of a ripe olive it appeared to be hanging by an invisible thread. Naturally, I was curious so after putting the mower away, I returned to examine the mysterious “blob.”

It was about four feet above the ground and looked like an oval-shaped piece of dark coloured moss. Leaning close, I could see tiny golden specks scattered over the dark surface. Gingerly, I touched the “blob.” Imagine my consternation when it started to dissolve. Tiny particles moved slowly in all directions, in an ever-expanding “explosion” of slow-motion without noise.

The expanded mass revealed itself as tiny spiders, perhaps a thousand or more. Each was dark with a gold-coloured abdomen and smaller than the size of a pin head

"Oh!" I thought, "I should have taken a photo before they scattered."
"Perhaps, if I leave them for a while they will re-group?" And they did. Well, almost; there were still a few in the "hinterlands" (see photo).

They remained in the central mass for two days, then some of them moved to a satellite site about a foot above and 20 degrees to the right. On succeeding days, decreasing sized satellite accumulations (mini-blobs) were established higher and higher, maintaining the 20 degrees to the right orientation. As many as six were established. Then one morning, all were gone.

Once before I had seen two of these expansions of spiderlings when my son lifted the lid of his BBQ. On that occasion they were expanding rapidly before being noticed, and the "blobs" had already "dissolved." On this latest observation, some clambered on the wall, others used invisible threads, and the effect was most mysterious. They seemed to move without effort on their own part; their tiny feet seeming to dance.

Next time (if ever) I'll be more diligent to photograph the expansion, and subsequent satellite "blobs."

Notice: The Montreal Bird Festival

Since the first festival held December 15 was so successful, the Biodôme has decided to hosting another on May 5-13. David Bird, this year's "featherfest" host, is offering something for seasoned ornithologists and backyard bird watchers alike.

Activities include a friendly birding competition between three local bird-watching clubs, a Mohawk chief telling native bird legends, bird banding, bird call tests, and excursions to excellent birding sites in the Montréal area. The bird feeders will be moved closer to the paths throughout the ecosystems and interpreters will be available to answer any questions.

The exhibit, "Bird Heaven", offers ideas on how to attract birds to your garden and how to encourage them to become permanent residents. "Talons and Feathers" features Quebec's birds of prey. Other exhibitions celebrate the beauty of birds, through photos, paintings and sculptures by some of Montréal's best artists. There will also be a film and video festival. Organizations, craftspeople and suppliers will be displaying their creations as well as items of ornithological interest. More information will be provided via the media or people may call Josee Bedard, Communication Co-ordinator, at (514) 868-3053 for further details

Coming Events

arranged by the Excursions & Lectures Committee.

For further information,
call the Club number (722-3050) after 10 a.m.

Times stated for excursions are departure times. Please arrive earlier; leaders start promptly. If you need a ride, don't hesitate to ask the leader. Restricted trips will be open to non-members only after the indicated deadlines.

ALL OUTINGS: *Please bring a lunch on full-day trips and dress according to the weather forecast and the activity. Binoculars and/or spotting scopes are essential on all birding trips. Unless otherwise stated, transportation will be by car pool.*

REGISTERED BUS TRIPS: *Make your reservation for Club bus excursions by sending a cheque or money order (payable to The Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club) to Box 35069, Westgate P.O., Ottawa, Ontario K1Z 1A2, at least ten days in advance. Include your name, address, telephone number and the name of the outing. Your cooperation is appreciated by the Committee so that we do not have to wait to the last moment to decide whether a trip should be cancelled due to low registration. We also wish to discourage postponing the actual payment of bus fees until the day of the event.*

EVENTS AT THE CANADIAN MUSEUM OF NATURE: *The Club is grateful to the Museum for their cooperation, and thanks the Museum for the use of these excellent facilities. Club members must be prepared to show their membership cards to gain access for Club functions after regular museum hours.*

BIRD STATUS LINE: *Phone 860-9000 to learn of recent sightings or birding potential in the Ottawa area. To report recent sightings call Michael Tate at 825-1231. This service is run on behalf of the Birds Committee and is available to members and non-members.*

Le Club des Ornithologues de l'Outaouais has a similar service, in French, run by Daniel St-Hilaire at 778-3413 and the Bird Status Line is 778-0737.

Sunday

1 April

6:30 a.m.

to

6:30 p.m.

BUS EXCURSION: SPRING BIRDING AT PRESQU'ILE

Leaders: Roy John and Monty Brigham

Meet: Lincoln Fields Shopping Centre, northeast corner of the parking lot, Richmond Road at Assaly Road.

Cost: \$30.00 (PLEASE REGISTER EARLY; see the introduction to Coming Events for information, and previous issue for details.)

Be sure to set your clock forward one hour Saturday evening.



Wednesday
4 April
7 a.m.

**SPRING BIRDING ALONG THE FLOODPLAINS OF
BEAR BROOK AND THE SOUTH NATION RIVER**

Leader: Bruce Di Labio

Meet: Elmvale Acres Shopping Centre, northwest corner of the parking lot at the junction of St. Lawrence Boulevard and Smyth Road.

This is a midweek all-day trip to view ducks, swans and other waterbirds. Please register at the Club number (722-3050) so that participants may be informed if alternate arrangements have to be made.

Saturday
7 April

EARLY MORNING BIRDS AND AMPHIBIANS

Leaders: Bernie Ladouceur and Tony Beck

9:30 p.m. to
1:30 a.m.

Meet: Tim Horton Donuts, south side of Robertson Road (i.e., Old Hwy. 7) between the Richmond Road turnoff and Moodie Drive in Bells Corners.

Rain (or wind)
dates:

Participants have an opportunity to locate and identify several nocturnal birds and amphibians, such as the Great Horned Owl, Barred Owl, Eastern Screech Owl, American Woodcock, Common Snipe, Ruffed Grouse, Chorus Frog, Spring Peeper, Wood and Leopard Frogs. Possible areas to visit include Richmond and Munster or other areas south and/or west of Bell's Corners. The outing is limited to 25. REGISTER WITH THE CLUB NUMBER (722-3050) by April 5. Please leave your phone number in case the trip is postponed (see above).

Sunday

8 April
7:30 p.m. to
11:30 p.m. or
(Good) Friday
13 April
9:30 p.m. to
1:30 a.m.

Tuesday
10 April
8:00 p.m.

**OFNC MONTHLY MEETING
THE LEITRIM WETLAND**

Speaker: Albert Dugal

Meet: Auditorium, Canadian Museum of Nature, Metcalfe and McLeod Streets.

The Leitrim Wetland, occupying some 400 hectares in south Ottawa, is the remnant of a much larger wetland area. Within the boundaries of this complex ecosystem lies a broad spectrum of moisture-loving plant communities, including a variety of woodlands and a fen. Some of the oldest trees in the Ottawa District occur here: ancient cedars, hemlocks, White Pines and larches, some up to 250 years old. The wetland is home to over 200 species of regionally significant plants, to at least 90 species of resident or breeding birds and a variety of other animals and insects. Albert will show why it is necessary to preserve this wetland and what steps are needed to attract public awareness.

Sunday
22 April
1-4 p.m.

ONTARIO BREEDING BIRD ATLAS WORKSHOP

Meet: The Fletcher Wildlife Garden.

Join Mike Cadman for a workshop and information session on the upcoming Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas project.

Participants will be given training in the following areas:

- how to conduct point counts
- how to collect breeding evidence
- how to use topographical maps
- song identification
- data entry and summary using the atlas web page
- GPS units (preferred models, costs, applications)
- significant species and colonial species (finding them and filling in data forms).

Information packages will be given to all volunteers then.

PLEASE NOTE: This meeting replaces the meeting of March 21, mentioned in the last issue of *Trail & Landscape*.

For more information: Christine Hanrahan 798-1620, vanessa@magma.ca

Friday
27 April
7:30 p.m.

OFNC SOIREE WINE AND CHEESE PARTY AND ANNUAL AWARDS CEREMONY

Meet: Unitarian Church Hall, 30 Cleary Avenue.

Join the celebration in honour of Ellaine Dickson. See previous issue for further details. Please reserve before April 20. Send cheques to OFNC, Box 35069, Westgate P.O. Ottawa, K1Z 1A2.

Sunday
29 April
6:30 a.m.
to
6:30 p.m.

BUS EXCURSION: HAWKS ALOFT AT DERBY HILL

Leaders: Bernie Ladouceur and Ken Allison

Meet: Lincoln Fields Shopping Centre, northeast corner of the parking lot, Richmond Road at Assaly Road.

Cost: \$30.00 (PLEASE REGISTER EARLY; see the introduction to Coming Events for information.)



When weather conditions are favourable, the spectacle of thousands of hawks migrating over Derby Hill, New York, is an amazing phenomenon well worth the long bus ride. Bring proof of citizenship for entry into the US. Optical equipment in new condition should be registered with Canada Customs in advance of the trip. The excursion will be cancelled on the day before if the weather forecast for the eastern end of Lake Ontario is particularly unfavourable. You will be notified of any change of plan. Transportation will be by a comfortable motorcoach equipped with washroom.

**Sunday
29 April
9:30 a.m.**

LICHENS IN OUR LANDSCAPE

Leader: Ernie Brodo

Meet: Lincoln Fields Shopping Centre, northeast corner of the parking lot, Richmond Road at Assaly Road. Join Ernie on a lichen-hunting ramble in Blakeney, Ontario (just north of Almonte), the site of last year's Bio-blitz. Ernie will point out the surprisingly diverse lichen flora on the trees, rocks and soil and will talk about factors influencing habitat preferences among lichens. Bring a hand lens or some magnifier (8-10× is best). The walk will take about three hours, so also bring a light lunch. In case of heavy rain, the trip will be postponed (call 723-2054 if weather is in question).

**May
to
September**

FLETCHER WILDILFE GARDEN

The interpretation Centre will be open Sunday afternoons to 4:00 p.m. and most Friday mornings.

Come in and see our displays or browse our library of reference works. We also have free leaflets and some Club publications for sale.



BIRD WALKS FOR BEGINNERS

The following walks of 3 or 4 hours duration are offered to novice birders.

Saturday	Time	Place	Leader
May 5	7:30 a.m.	Britannia*	Don Davidson
May 12	7:30 a.m.	Britannia*	Ken Allison
May 26	7:30 a.m.	Britannia*	Mary McWhinney

* Entrance gate to the Britannia Filtration Plant on Cassels Road



MAY EVENING STROLLS

These three informal walks are offered to expand members' general knowledge of local natural history. Children are most welcome on these outings. Wear suitable footwear and bring insect repellent.

Thursday 3 May 6:30 p.m.	BRITANNIA WOODS CONSERVATION AREA Leader: Dave Moore Meet: Entrance gate to the Britannia Filtration Plant on Cassels Road
Thursday 17 May 6:30 p.m.	STONY SWAMP Leader: Frank Pope Meet: Lincoln Heights Galleria, northeast corner of the parking lot, Richmond Road at Assaly Road
Thursday 24 May 6:30 p.m.	TOUR OF THE ORNAMENTAL GARDENS, CEF (Especially lilacs and crabapples) Leader: Joan Speirs Meet: Main parking lot, Central Experimental Farm, west side of Prince of Wales Drive, just south of traffic circle.

Tuesday May 8 7:30 p.m. Social 8:00 p.m. Formal program	OFNC MONTHLY MEETING PEGMATITES! Speaker: Scott Ercit Meet: Auditorium, Canadian Museum of Nature, Metcalfe and McLeod Streets. We commonly err in assuming that unfamiliar terms denote either trivial or esoteric themes, otherwise, certainly, we'd be familiar with them, wouldn't we? Pegmatites are an excellent case in point. Except for geoscientists, few have heard of pegmatites, yet most have benefitted from the exotic resources derived from this rock type. Scott Ercit, from the Canadian Museum of Nature, will discuss the origin, evolution, mythology and importance of pegmatites both to science and society, including their wise use by industry and some very unwise uses.
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Thursday 10 May to Sunday 13 May	SPRING EXCURSION TO POINT PELEE Your Club, through New Dimensions Tours, is offering an excursion to Point Pelee to observe birds and other interesting aspects of natural history. Join your fellow Club members in this naturalists' paradise. See previous issue for details
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Saturday
12 May
8:30 a.m.

SPRING WALK TO MILL OF KINTAIL

Leaders: Philip Martin and Mary McWhinney

Meet: Lincoln Heights Galleria, northeast corner of the parking lot, Richmond Road at Assaly Road.

The Mill of Kintail is a conservation area south of Ottawa between Almonte and Pakenham with a well developed forested area and many interesting trails. We hope to see many species of herbaceous plants and trees in flower. There is also the house that used to belong to James Tate MacKenzie and an optional tour of the visitors' centre and museum which we could explore for a small entrance fee. Bring field guides, a hand lens and a lunch for this half-day excursion.

Sunday
13 May
9:00 a.m.

FRIENDS OF THE CENTRAL EXPERIMENTAL FARM'S ANNUAL AND UNUSUAL PLANT SALE

Meet: East side parking lot of the Neatby Building, Central Experimental Farm, Carling and Maple Lane

The sale is a fundraising event for FCEF. Proceeds help in the restoration of the plant collection. Vendors welcome. For further information contact Diana Dakers at 230-3276.

Saturday
26 May
12:00 noon

LAND SNAILS AT THE BURNT LANDS ALVAR

Leader: Wayne Grimm

Meet: Parking Lot at junction of Hwy 44 and Dwyer Hill Road (Ring Philip Martin at 729-3218 for details.)

The Burnt Lands Alvar is home to several rare species of animals and plants. This excursion will focus on numerous snails, including the only known living examples of one species. PLEASE REGISTER AT THE CLUB NUMBER (722-3050) BY MAY 20. No special equipment is required, beyond your chosen protection from biting May Diptera. Bring a lunch for this half-day outing.

Tuesday
29 May
7:00 a.m.

LATE SPRING MIGRANTS ALONG THE OTTAWA RIVER

Leader: Tony Beck

Meet: Entrance gate to the Britannia Filtration Plant on Cassels Road

Indeed, it is the early birder that spots the warbler! Tony will lead participants on this morning outing through the Britannia Conservation area, including the Ottawa River shoreline. We will concentrate mainly on late spring migrants and birds on territory.

Saturday

2 June

9:30 a.m.

BUTTERFLIES OF SPRING

Leader: Peter Hall

Meet: Lincoln Heights Galleria, northeast corner of the parking lot, Richmond Road at Assaly Road.

Join Peter Hall, co-author of the *Butterflies of Canada*, to discover the butterflies of the north edge of the Long Swamp area. More than sixty species have been seen along an easy-to-walk road crossing through a variety of unusual habitats, including marshes and alvars. Bring a lunch, suitable footwear and a butterfly net, if you have one, for this day-long excursion.

Saturday

2 June

9:00 a.m.

to

11:00 a.m.

ANNUAL FLETCHER WILDLIFE GARDEN PLANT SALE

Meet: Fletcher Wildlife Garden Interpretive Centre, east side of Prince of Wales Drive, south of the traffic circle.

We will be selling native plants and other garden perennials.

All proceeds go toward the upkeep of the FWG's Backyard Garden. Please help by donating your surplus plants (native species preferred). Bring plants, in pots or plastic bags and clearly labelled with the plant's name, to the Interpretive centre no later than 10 a.m. the day of the event. If you would like to donate plants before that date or require assistance call 730-0714 or 224-7619 for more information or assistance.



Sunday

3 June

7:00 p.m.

BREEDING BIRD ATLAS FIELD WORKSHOP: MARLBOROUGH FOREST.

Leader: Mark Gawn

Meet: Richmond Bakery parking lot in Richmond, Ontario.

This half day workshop will kickstart the atlas field season. If you are new to "atlassing", or just want to brush up on your technique, this workshop is for you. Bring fly dope and good walking gear. Check the bird status line at 778-0737 for more details closer to the date.

Rain

date

10 June

7:00 p.m.



Tuesday
June 12
7:30 p.m.
Social
8:00 p.m.
Formal
program

OFNC MONTHLY MEETING
SHARKS, CROCS, AND BIRDS WITH TEETH:
CANADA'S PRAIRIE OCEAN IN THE AGE OF THE
DINOSAURS

Speaker: Stephen Cumbaa

Meet: Auditorium, Canadian Museum of Nature, Metcalfe and McLeod Streets.

From about 100 million years ago until the cataclysmic end of the Cretaceous, North America was divided into two island subcontinents. The east and west were separated by a shallow sea that stretched from the developing Rocky Mountains to Manitoba, and from the Gulf of Mexico to the Arctic Ocean. This warm, often chalky sea was home to clams the size of a kitchen table, a wide diversity of sharks, bony fishes up to 5 meters in length, even larger marine reptiles, and flightless, loon-like birds with teeth. For over 100 years fossil bones and shells of these creatures have been found in the badlands of western Kansas, but it is only within the last ten years that extensive fossil deposits from the Western Interior Seaway have been found in Canada. Stephen, a Research Scientist with the CMN, will talk of these recent fossil discoveries made jointly with a team from the Royal Saskatchewan Museum, as well as current research on the paleoenvironment and paleoecology of the eastern margin of the Seaway about 95 million years ago.

Saturday
16 June
8:00 a.m.

TOUR OF THE LEITRIM WETLAND

Leader: Albert Dugal

Meet: K-Mart Store parking area in Blossom Park. Drive south on Hwy 31 (Bank Street South). The place is four traffic lights south of the Hunt Club-Bank Street intersection. The Leitrím wetland between has some of the richest fauna and flora in the Ottawa Region. This is a good chance to appreciate the extent of the wonderful botanical diversity of this fen, including some rare old-growth pine and hemlock, many unique herbs and some fascinating birds. You can then add your voice to those in the OFNC and Sierra Club who are trying to prevent this valuable piece of our local heritage from being obliterated by development. The extensive checklist of plants in *T&L* 35 (1):16-65 should be brought for reference. Wear sturdy footwear and do not forget to bring your insect repellent and a lunch for this long half-day excursion.

Sunday
17 June
7:00 a.m.

**WARBLERS AND NORTHERN BREEDERS IN LAC LA
BLANCHE AREA**

Leader: Bernie Ladouceur

Meet: Supreme Court Building, front entrance, Wellington at Kent Street.

Come and explore a new and very little known area north of Buckingham to see birds that do not normally breed in the Ottawa region. Some of the birds we hope to see include warblers, Blue-headed Vireos, Golden-crowned Kinglets, finches, and Olive-sided Flycatchers. Bring insect repellent and a lunch for this long half-day trip.

Sunday
24 June
9:00 a.m.

VISIT TO THE PURDON FEN CONSERVATION AREA

Leader: Robina Bennett

Meet: Lincoln Heights Galleria, northeast corner of the parking lot, Richmond Road at Assaly Road.

The Purdon Fen, south of Almonte in Lanark County, is at the bottom of a sheltered ravine where a large number of uncommon shrubs and herbs can be found. Prominent among these is the Pink Lady's Slipper which grows to about 2 feet. Other wildflowers include the Yellow Lady's Slipper, the Leafy White Bog Orchid and the Pitcher Plant. You can easily see most of the plants from a boardwalk. Bring a lunch and insect repellent for this long half-day outing. There will be an opportunity to canoe and swim in the afternoon.

Saturday
30 June
9:00 a.m.

WATER PLANTS AND ALGAE

Leaders: Lynn Gillespie and Philip Martin

Meet: Interpretation Centre at the Baxter Conservation Area on the Rideau River, off Highway 16.

A chance to see river vegetation, including shoreline and aquatic plants and algae that float on the water surface. Participants will be able to view microorganisms under the microscope as well as macrophytes that are prominent at the beach. We also hope to explore some of the trails through the marshy areas leading off to the south of the Interpretation Centre. If you wish to wade in the water, protective footwear such as birkenstocks are recommended. Changing facilities are available for those wishing to bathe. Bring insect repellent, suitable field guides and a lunch. Please REGISTER BY JUNE 15. TELEPHONE THE CLUB NUMBER AT 722-3050 in case this excursion has to be rescheduled.

Saturday
7 July
6:00 a.m.

GENERAL INTEREST VISIT TO ALGONQUIN PARK

Leaders: Tony Beck and Roy John

Meet: Lincoln Heights Galleria, northeast corner of the parking lot, Richmond Road at Assaly Road.

This midsummer trip will feature primarily northern nesting birds, including warblers, tanagers, Grey Jays, Ruffed Grouse and Spruce Grouse, and many others. We also hope to see characteristic seasonal flowers and insects. PLEASE REGISTER BY TELEPHONING THE CLUB NUMBER BY JUNE 23 so we can gauge the number of persons interested in advance. If there are a large number of participants, we will arrange to travel by bus for a small fee.

Saturday
14 July
8:30 a.m.

GENERAL INTEREST WALK TO SHAW WOODS AND GOLDEN LAKE VILLAGE

Leader: Bill Grant

Meet: Lincoln Heights Galleria, northeast corner of the parking lot, Richmond Road at Assaly Road.

The Shaw Woods is a long established and protected nature reserve of a square mile or more, overlooking the shores of Lake Dore, north of Eganville. The area is on a gentle hill and is covered with mixed forest, composed mainly of hardwood, but with a good variety of spruces, including some quite large trees. There is also a small wetland area. The nearby village of Golden Lake has one or two interesting stores. Car-pooling is encouraged and participants sharing a ride should be prepared to contribute towards expenses. Bring a lunch for this daylong excursion.

Sunday
15 July
1:00 p.m.

FERN IDENTIFICATION FIELD TRIP

Leader: Bill Arthurs

Meet: Elmvale Shopping centre, northeast corner of the parking lot, St. Laurent Boulevard at Smyth Road.

Participants will have a chance to learn about the diverse ferns that grow in the Mer Bleue and to get practical experience of using identification keys. This afternoon walk should also give you some ideas about the species you might wish to cultivate in your garden.

Saturday
21 July
8:30 a.m.

THE DRAGONS OF MORRIS ISLAND

Leader: Chris Lewis

Meet: Lincoln Heights Galleria, northeast corner of the parking lot, Richmond Road at Assaly Road. Morris Island, which is surrounded by large stretches of slowly flowing water, is a wonderful ecological habitat for dragonflies and damselflies, large and small. Join Chris for an exciting excursion and you may see one of these fast-moving insects catch its prey while on the wing. An insect net is a must if you want to see their fantastic colour patterns. Bring a lunch and insect repellent - for the flies, not the dragons! Again, children are most welcome on this outing.

Sunday
29 July
11:30 a.m.

COCKLES AND MUSSELS ALIVE, ALIVE, OH!*

Leader: Fred Schueler

Meet: Lincoln Heights Galleria, northeast corner of the parking lot, Richmond Road at Assaly Road. Cool off on a hot day visiting two of the hotspots of native Unionid Mussel diversity in the Ottawa area. We'll proceed to the Jock River at Greenbank Road and look at the diverse Unionids there - big old *Lampsilis 'ovata'*, some of the finest *Strophitus undulatus* in Eastern Ontario, and the chance of *Ligumia recta*, and then proceed to the lock bypass rapids of the Rideau at Andrewsville, where *Lasmigona costata*, *Lampsilis 'ovata'* and *Ligumia recta* reach great ages and huge sizes, and *Lampsilis radiata* lie about on the bedrock. Come with wading shoes and a lunch, and prepare to get refreshingly wet. PLEASE REGISTER AT THE CLUB NUMBER (722-3050) BY JULY 27.

*Joint excursion with members of the Eastern Ontario Museum

DEADLINE: Material intended for the July-September 2001 issue must be in the editor's hands by May 1, 2001. Mail your manuscripts to:

Karen McLachlan Hamilton
2980 Moodie Drive, Nepean, ON K2J 4S7
H: (613) 838-4943 e-mail: hamilton@storm.ca

ANY ARTICLES FOR TRAIL & LANDSCAPE?

Have you been on an interesting field trip or made some unusual observations recently? Is there a colony of rare plants or a nesting site that needs protection? Write up your thoughts and send them to *Trail & Landscape*. We can accept e-mail, IBM-compatible diskettes, or submissions in traditional form—typed, written, printed or painted!

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ofnc@achilles.net

ISSN 0041-0748



TRAIL & LANDSCAPE

Published by

THE OTTAWA FIELD-NATURALISTS' CLUB

Postage paid in cash at Ottawa

Change of Address Notices and Undeliverable Copies:

Box 35069, Westgate P.O.

Ottawa, K1Z 1A2

Return postage guaranteed

Printed by
LOMOR PRINTERS LTD.